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**From:** "Obegi, Doug"  
**Sent:** Fri 11/12/2010 7:58:13 PM  
**Subject:** Mercury News Editorial Urges Getting BDCP's Science Right, Rather than Rushing the Plan

Dear David,

We wanted to make sure you saw this editorial from the San Jose Mercury News on BDCP. It is a powerful reminder that BDCP must consider the State Water Board's Delta flow report in order to get the science right on how much flow the Delta needs, and that we are right to ensure that we fix the flaws in the effects analysis before we make decisions, rather than rushing to adopt plans based on bad science. It also reaffirms the decision the Administration made to invite fishermen, Delta communities, and other enviros to meet with the Secretary and to work together on fixing BDCP (for which we are very grateful).

Finally, it points the way to water supply solutions - like agricultural conservation - that are keys to a truly adequate and reliable water supply for California. These tools are also keys to progress.

I hope and expect the Brown Administration will be a more productive partner in fixing these problems and pulling a successful plan together.

Thanks,  
Doug

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Delta's health must take priority for California  
Mercury News editorial  
11/11/2010

California's \$25 billion budget deficit is not the biggest political headache Jerry Brown faces as he returns to the governor's office. That dubious distinction belongs to the ongoing battle over water.

The deadline for the draft of the long-awaited Bay Delta Conservation Plan is Thursday. It's designed to serve as a road map to balance protecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta's environment with providing a reliable water supply for farmers and cities. But the team of experts working on it is reportedly nowhere near agreement on the most important issue: How much water flow is needed to restore the health of the Delta? That must determine how much is left for distribution to agriculture and to residential water agencies throughout the state.

Among its many flaws, the draft plan fails to take into account an independent, comprehensive study on the health of the Delta completed in July by the state Water Resources Control Board.

It concluded that users are taking twice as much water from the Delta as they should, diverting as much as 50 percent. If this continues, the study says, the Delta eventually will be unable to provide safe water to anyone.

It's inconceivable that a Bay Delta Conservation Plan could be offered without taking this report into consideration.

Now we're told a consensus plan could take another year. There's little choice but to wait, since a weak plan based on questionable science is worthless. Brown needs to make sure the next version deals with

the science in a credible way.

The Delta is the West Coast's largest estuary, providing about half of Silicon Valley's water supply. Its health has been declining for years, posing the threat that the quality of the water would become undrinkable.

Last year, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Legislature put together an \$11 billion bond deal designed to fix the problem, but last summer they decided to pull it from this fall's ballot: It was loaded with too much pork to pass, even if voters could get beyond the fact that there's no real agreement on what to do.

A workable plan needs the buy-in of urban dwellers, environmentalists, agriculture, water agencies and the fishing industry. Besides restoring the health of the estuary, funding is needed to repair the maze of 1,000 levees that could collapse Katrina-style in a stormy year or a major earthquake.

The biggest frustration is that California really has enough water. It's just that agriculture, which gulps 80 percent of it, has not been a partner in conservation.

Schwarzenegger's deal called on urban users to reduce consumption by 20 percent but asked nothing of farmers. If ag conserved just 10 percent, there would be no need for billions of dollars to pay for new water storage facilities.

Of course, now is a terrible time to put new burdens on the agricultural Central Valley, whose economy is among the worst-hit in the nation. But water is a long-term challenge, and the state has an obligation to preserve a healthy Delta for generations to come.

Welcome back to the governor's chair, Mr. Brown.